2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

Occasionally we would hear the shrill voice of the *Muezzin* as he chanted from the mosque tower, and those who were caught napping in the streets or desert would fall on their knees straight away and prostrate themselves to the ground. The Arab method of prayer is both complicated and physically uncomfortable. The incantation is said standing, but after each prayer the worshipper, always facing the east, will fall on his knees, touching the ground several times with his forehead. The guards in the Fort had the habit of performing their religious rites and exercises in front of my office door and, as I did not like to disturb them at such times, the practice proved a trifle inconvenient.

At seven-thirty Bird drove Allison and myself to the sheikh's palace, which was a rather unimposing residence about a quarter of a mile away. The real palace, or fort, from which the royal flag fluttered from a ruined tower, was only a few yards away, but it was seldom used as a residence. Originally built by the Portuguese when they invaded the Persian Gulf in the seventeenth century, it had been renovated and partially rebuilt in desert style by successive sheikhs, but the present ruler believed in retrenchment rather than expenditure. He had no intention of spending his money on the upkeep of so pretentious a relic, which was imposing in a ruinous way from the outside, but within shabby and dilapidated in the extreme. In cool weather he would sit with his entourage on a bench outside the great gateway, but the interior was used only by his sons as a kind of gigantic playroom, or by some of his retinue for indulging in shady deals or illegal hashish smoking.

The main residence, to which we were now driving, was a two-storeyed house with a fretted balcony, Moorish windows and a heavily studded door of plain tulip wood. A high mud wall rose up to the windows on one side, and behind this lay the harem. We were met on the steps by the sheikh, Sultan bin Saqr, his three sons, and about a dozen bearded gentlemen with gilded swords and rifles. They formed the sheikh's retinue, and were secretaries, ministers, advisers of some sort and, generally speaking, 'hangers-on', it being a custom of that country for members of the court to attach themselves to the ruler and live at his expense. The cost of maintaining such an entourage and household was about a thousand rupees a day, I was informed; that is, in English money at the present rate of exchange, about £25. Needless to say, the greater part of this sum was derived from taxes and rents.

Sultan bin Saqr wore a perfumed robe of embroidered linen,

with a triple aggal of gold thread above his flowered silk head-dress, or kufieyh. His sandals were likewise embroidered with gold thread, and he wore his ceremonial gold sword and curved *hangar*. His three sons, aged six, ten and twelve, were similarly dressed, whilst the nobles, although garbed more simply, managed to create an air of affluence. One marked difference was that the sheikh's beard was luxuriously oiled, combed and scented, whereas the beards of his courtiers were ragged, unkempt and rather dirty.

Closely guarded by a ruffianly gang of armed thugs, the sheikh, after embracing us, took us into the inner courtyard. This was a plain, unfurnished room with a floor of black and white marble squares, where the sheikh, his sons, and the Khan Bahadur, an old friend of ours, whose name was Abdur bin Razzak, removed their sandals prior to entering the throne room. As Europeans entering an Arab house do not remove their shoes, it being considered beneath their dignity to do so (although in reality the practice has a religious basis and would, therefore, have no meaning for an infidel), we followed the royal party after divesting ourselves of our hats. These, together with our torches, we were advised by Abdur bin Razzak to keep in our possession, otherwise they might be difficult to recover afterwards!

The throne room was a long, bare apartment with undecorated, distempered walls broken only by a frieze of the inevitable Moorish pattern. The floor was covered with exquisite Persian rugs, and at the end of the room were half a dozen chairs of Victorian Gothic design covered with purple cushions. It takes a long time to sit down in an Arab house. It is customary for the host to make the pretence of motioning the guest to a chair; the guest is expected to refuse the invitation and, in turn, to motion the host to his own chair. When there are several guests, this absurd ritual of gesticulation can continue for several minutes. Eventually the sheikh settled himself in the largest chair, or throne, and we arranged ourselves in order of precedence on either side of him. Since Captain Bird was the only one who spoke Arabic at all fluently, and Abdur bin Razzak the only Arab present who spoke any English, conversation with the sheikh and his sons had to be conducted through these two intermediaries. I have often suspected later that the eldest son, Abdul, had quite a useful command of English, but he never showed the slightest sign of understanding a word that we said. When I got to know him better, however, and found out

it, and as a result it had got clogged and fouled. One day he fired it off in a moment of exuberance and the barrel burst about eight inches from the muzzle. I took the damaged weapon to the R.A.F. armourer's shop and got him to saw the top part of the barrel off. Thus shortened, it made an excellent short-range weapon, effective at 200 yards, though it went off with a violent explosion and had a recoil like an elephant gun. In addition to the .303, Sparkes had brought a Webley, and Cranley a Colt automatic. Thus for several minutes we amused ourselves by taking shots at a stake we had fixed in the ground fifty yards away, to the applause and amusement of a group of Arab labourers from the date plantations.

Five camels approached our resting place from the other side of the creek, and through my Zeiss glasses I saw that one of the two riders was the Khan Sahib. As soon as he rode up, he explained that he had hired them from a nearby village and suggested that we should proceed to Mahrid on the backs of these scraggy-looking beasts. I had never ridden a camel before, and was not encouraged by the venemously sly look which the leading she-camel gave me; she had a rich fawn coat, bared in patches around her scrawny haunches by distemper, and she chewed viciously at her bridle with yellow teeth. However, I crawled on to her back, Cranley scrambling up behind me, and the rest of the party followed suit. Suleman Beg was left in charge of the truck. The caravan then started the journey to Mahrid. The owner of the camels, who took the lead, set off at a loping canter which I found most uncomfortable when I tried to emulate him. After a few miles I began to feel rather sick, and was glad when, an hour and a half later, the little seaport of Mahrid hove into sight. When I jumped off my steed I began to scratch violently, for the camel's hair was infested with fleas.

The Khan Sahib sent one of his seamen back to the battle-wagon with tins of petrol, which the men carried on top of their heads, and invited us inside his house. It was a cool plaster building of typical Arab design, with glassless windows protected by iron bars. A large, iron-studded teak gate led into an open courtyard, with stone steps leading up to the main living room on the left wing. This was a barely furnished chamber, with Shiraz rugs on the floor, a solitary Turkish inlaid table, and some wooden benches. We sat down and gratefully imbibed glasses of cool sherbet, enjoying the sea breeze that blew in through the windows. Arab children in the village street peered through the grating at us, begging, as they invariably do, for baksheesh, until the Khan Sahib, uttering a 'roh, zirar!' sent them scampering away.

mile of shallow water. There was a haze over the land, a sure sign of hot weather ahead, and the straggling town of Ras-al-Khaimah had the blurred appearance of a Whistler pastel. The palace, cornered by battlemented towers with an architectural resemblance to a crusader's castle, was built of pink rock, the rose-red hue of Petra. In the sunlight it had the beauty of a coral shell, hemmed in by the cube-shaped houses of the merchants, walled gardens of date palms and pomegranates, and the gleaming gold dome of the mosque.

We disembarked alongside a little wooden pier and began to trail up the steep, pebbled shore towards the palace. A guard of Beni Yas tribesmen approached with rifles at the ready, until the Khan Sahib gave them a sign and spoke to them in the local dialect. Recognizing him, they bowed respectfully and, after scrutinizing us with a great show of curiosity, ushered us through the tall gateway into the palace courtyard. It was open to the sun, with two tall palm trees growing as high as the verandas, on which lolled Arab retainers in the act of performing their morning toilet. Camels, tied to stakes in the ground, reared up on their knees as we entered and began to snarl in their unpleasant fashion.

Standing in an ornately-decorated doorway was a tall, white-bearded figure, clad in long white robes, with a gold sword belted to his waist. It was Sheikh Sultan bin Salim, ruler of Ras-al-Khaimah. He slowly descended the steps to the courtyard and embraced the Khan Sahib in the Arab style, and then shook hands with each of us in turn. In a few minutes we were joined by the members of the Court, and the procession wended its way into the cool, dim reception chamber at the far end of the palace. The building was in a much better state of repair than the palace at Sharjah, and the floor of the chamber was of black and white marble squares, highly polished by sandals. The chairs, of rosewood inlaid with mother o' pearl, were emblazoned with the sheikh's coat of arms, whilst priceless Shiraz rugs, of wine red and Prussian blue pattern, were scattered on the floor.

Silk cushions were provided for us to sit upon, and after the usual introductory conversation, a slave brought in a pot of fragrant coffee. A large brass tray was placed by our side; this contained numerous sweetmeats, including Turkish delight, and little bowls of pomegranates, oranges and almonds. The sheikh questioned us about our journey, and seemed highly amused when we told him of the breakdown of the cars. He soon started off on a long discourse about the advantages of having an airfield at Ras-al-Khaimah,

we all were sensible that behind the smiling mask lay a mind as keen and poised as the blade of his ceremonial sword.

When we left the palace, the sun was blazing from a cloudless sky and the creek shone like a mirror. We returned to the Khan Sahib's house to pack some refreshments, and then mounted the six camels which he had procured for us and began the eight-mile ride to his summer residence at the foot of the mountains. Although a comparatively short distance, the journey was a tiring one. Apart from a few scattered palm trees, there was no shade, and the sun, being in the meridian, was at its fiercest and beat down upon us mercilessly. The humidity was extremely trying, also: Frew thought it must have been about 80°. The perspiration streamed off our faces and seeped through our shirts. Our camels, also affected by the heat, lumbered along in leisurely fashion, which was not so uncomfortable as when they cantered. We passed several large date plantations, as shady and inviting as an English wood, and noisy with the cries of jays and parakeets. Brilliant-hued butterflies darted among the palm fronds, some of them measuring six inches across the wings.

Crossing a dried-up water course, or *wadhi*, we reached the foot of the hills. Of buff and pink sandstone, they sloped gradually for 300 feet, and were easily climbable for that distance. At that point they gave way to sheer cliffs of black and brown igneous rock, formidable with giant buttresses and massive boulders. Occasionally we glimpsed passes and crevices along the slopes which were honeycombed with caves. In these, the Khan Sahib informed us, the Shi'hou tribes lived. About 2,000 feet up, there were plateaux in the mountains, with small valleys where the tribesmen cultivated corn and sugar canes. We saw nothing of the Shi'hou, however, and after an hour's ride entered a low-lying valley through an avenue of tall neam trees.

There were about twenty houses on this summer estate. Each was a two-storied coral and plaster dwelling, with an open veranda running round the top floor. A low mud wall and a wicket gate divided the properties, each of which had its guard of sleepy-looking Arabs armed with rifles. We dismounted in front of the gateway, leaving our camels in charge of the guard. In contrast to the surrounding desert, the garden was like an illustration from the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*. White and crimson roses flourished in pots on either side of the path, whilst masses of red and purple bougainvillea trailed over the veranda. There was even a small

[Dear Ras-al-Khaimah -- Analyst]

[Shi 'hou]

sheikh's name and address in Arabic, and a statement in the same language to the effect that the bearer had his permission to travel through Oman without let or hindrance. It also offered dire penalties, including the amputation of the right hand, to any who dared to show violence to the bearer. Unfolding this rather dirty piece of paper I handed it to the headman. He held it gingerly in his fingers, gazing at it suspiciously, and pretended to read it although it was upside down. With a shrug he then handed it to another tribesman, but this man could make nothing of the document either.

Although they could not understand Arabic script, I think they must have had some inkling of its meaning, for they began a violent altercation amongst themselves. One of them suddenly pointed in the direction of Ras-al-Khaimah, and then at us. Beginning to get rather tired of all this pantomime, I decided to take decisive measures. There is a rule in the desert, at least among the Bedouins, that if you are attacked you should seize the garment of the most respectable Arab and cry: '*Daheel*', which means 'protection'. Under the unwritten laws of Arab hospitality, he is obliged to keep you in safe custody for at least twenty-four hours. The principle is not unlike that obtaining in the Middle Ages, when the outlaw could enter a church and claim sanctuary from the clergy.

I had no idea how it would work with the *Shi'hou*, but I was determined to try. Dashing forward I seized the scanty hem of the headman's *kufiyeh* and yelled '*Daheel*' at the top of my voice. To my surprise the old man's face was suddenly contorted with fear, and he stepped back as though I had struck him a blow. His rapid action resulted in a piece of the rotten cloth coming away in my hands and he was left almost naked. The effect of his predicament on the other *Shi'hou* was astonishing. At first amazement, then amusement, was written on their faces. Some grinned widely, others burst into shrieks of laughter. Even the headman, who had covered up his bare limbs as best he could with a few shreds of cloth, was grinning sheepishly. All signs of hostility had vanished. With a gesture the headman beckoned us towards the hut from which the shrieking woman had emerged.

Closely followed by a still laughing bodyguard, we marched towards the hut. The headman entered first, directing us to follow him. It was dark and dirty inside as well as hot and foul-smelling. Our hosts squatted on the bare floor in a circle, which we joined.

2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

at Sharjah creek, and was formally entertained by the sheikh once a month, I seldom had the opportunity of visiting the town itself. Smaller and less scattered than Dubai, Sharjah is typically Arabian, and the plain, square houses of the merchants, built of whitewashed juss, bear a strange resemblance to the 'functional' houses publicized so much in the architectural press. They are based on a simple plan; in the centre is the courtyard, with the living quarters on one side, and the sleeping apartments on the other. They are seldom higher than two storeys, but an appearance of height is given to them by the tall, square wind-towers, or Persian ventilators, which circulate cool draughts of air throughout the house during even the hottest days.

A long covered corridor usually runs at the back of the house, linking the living and sleeping quarters, and behind this are the kitchen and lavatories. The two wings are also joined at the front of the house by a full-length veranda, where the owner and his family sit in the evenings, drinking their sherbet or coffee. A rug or coco-nut matting, a few plain teak chairs, or perhaps a small tiled table, complete the furnishing of the average living room; the bedrooms are even more sparsely furnished, with little more than the canvas charpoy, or Indian bed, although many Arabs prefer to sleep on a rug on the floor.

It was during one of my occasional visits to Sharjah that I met Hassan bin Ahmidfa, the young son of a pearl merchant; his house is on the edge of the creek and is one of the largest and most elaborate in Sharjah, and furnished in the Turkish style. The huge doors leading to the courtyard are of unvarnished sandalwood, exquisitely carved with fabulous beasts and the conventional floral designs one sees on Kermani rugs. Hassan, who speaks flawless English, received part of his education at Bombay University, where he studied literature and economics, an unusual combination. He is very interested in Western culture and politics and extremely well-informed on most subjects.

Our conversations ranged from a discussion on Shaw to Schopenhauer and Kant, both of whose philosophies he found untrue and pessimistic; he could not agree that what the former called 'the world of ideas' had no objective existence apart from our sensory-perceptions of it, and argued that man could not attain happiness without realism. For an Oriental, Hassan was strangely materialistic, although it must not be assumed that the average Arab is a mystic; he is probably less so than the average German.

most of whom belonged to the Quasimi clan, of which the Sheikh of Sharjah is the titular head. I have had many a joke with Sheikh Sultan and his nobles over stories of the old piratical days, and they were greatly amused to learn that my great-great-grandfather, who entered the Royal Navy as a midshipman in 1789, had taken part in a sortie against Sharjah in 1830, when his frigate shelled the town as a reprisal against a murderous attack on a British merchantman. I shall refer later to the history of piracy in Oman which, on account of the predatory raids on shipping, gained the title of 'the Pirate Coast' in the last century.

The town of Sharjah is built on the shores of the creek, the contour of which it follows in crescent shape until the open sea is reached; at low tide a spit of sand or 'bar', separates the creek from the Gulf. Only at low tide is it possible to cross the creek on foot and make the journey to Khan; on the far side of this sand-bridge or 'bar' there is a primitive wooden lighthouse, built by the sheikh for the guidance of the pearling boats, and a small colony of fishermen's huts. The residences of the merchants, which are all two-storeyed buildings with wide verandas and imposing gateways, are built facing the sea, a distinct advantage in the hot weather. When a breeze is blowing, they are cooler inside in the summer months than an air-conditioned room at the Fort, and much more pleasant.

The town is about half a mile in length, and an eighth of a mile wide, with narrow, crooked streets running through the centre, and quaint, dark alleyways formed by the back walls of the houses. I could never get accustomed to the twists and curves of these streets, some of which were wide enough for only two people to pass abreast, although the Arabs used to ride donkeys and camels through them. Little doorways would suddenly open in the walls, whilst from a window high up would descend a cascade of refuse or dirty water. Some of these doorways are extremely beautiful; shaped like the double doors of an old English church, they are set in a frame of decorated stone, and the unvarnished teak is studded with pointed brass knobs. Sometimes they are inset with a secondary door, large enough to admit one person.

One afternoon I accompanied the Station Engineer, Sparkes, to Sharjah on a shopping expedition; we took a mechanic, Mahmud, with us to act as interpreter. Sparkes wanted to haggle with one of the merchants, and rather impolitely declined to rely on my Arabic. He had recently purchased an old Arab seal, a large, oval

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The Khan Bahadur bin Razzak, British Residency Agent, Trucial Oman, standing in front of the magnificent Persian doorway of his house in Sharjah

following p 140 (b)

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361 coco-nut trees grow down to the shore on either side of the creek, on the southern side of which is a palm-mat 'summer palace' belonging to the Sheikh of Ras-al-Khaimah, now used to house a discarded wife. The town is divided by the creek into two sections—Dubai proper, where the merchants and wealthier classes live, and Dera, the fishermen's quarter. We made for the latter and moored alongside a primitive wooden jetty beside which large pearling dhows were undergoing a careen.

342 The streets of Dera are filthy in the extreme, the inhabitants living in hovels roofed with palm-matting supported by wooden joists. The only presentable house was the coral and mortar residence of Ali, the Anglo-Persian Company's agent in Dubai; we stopped here for a few minutes and had a cup of tea made with 438 condensed milk. The Arabs, whose chief occupation is pearl 164 diving, fishing, shipbuilding and wool-weaving, were ragged and unkempt; many had sores on their legs and arms, and appeared to be suffering from eye infections. Many of the children were 364 badly pock-marked. The stench of refuse, stale fish, camel dung and rotting food was unbearable, and attracted clouds of flies.

144 One noticed a variety of racial types. The Omani Arabs predominated, but one saw also fair-skinned Persians, Bedouins, Sunussi, and negroid types who were obviously ex-slaves. Many of the Arabs, thin-bearded men with hawk-like noses, looked more 443 villainous than any I have seen. We strolled through the bazaar, but the shops were small and untidy and displayed goods of inferior quality. In several of the shops I noticed ancient iron safes, gaudily painted, which were of English manufacture and had obviously 159 been taken from merchantmen by the pirates. There is little doubt that most of the inhabitants of Dera, a vicious, sullen crowd, would gladly have returned to piracy had they been given half a chance. 142 In contrast to their cruel, sardonic faces around us, I was struck by the beauty of some of the children who swarmed at our side, feeling our clothes and touching our hands. A little girl of nine or ten attracted my attention; her perfectly formed features, luminous brown eyes and Grecian lips made me sigh for a pencil and sketchbook. The little boys were delightful creatures too, with laughing eyes and white, even teeth.

363 The streets were extremely dark, with high walls on one side and palm-matting completely covering them like a roof, whilst 443 the 'road' was a quagmire of mud and camel dung. Six shops out of every ten exhibited panniers of dried fruits and cereals, figs,

2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

the horizon. It took about eight minutes to cross the creek, which is half a mile wide at this point, but the boats are heavy and clumsily made and the oars consist of rectangular boards nailed to a large pole. The boat was run on to the muddy, steep shore and we jumped out, picking our way amongst garbage and squatting Arabs.

The houses in Dubai Town, at the western and south side of the creek, are larger and more imposing than those in Dera; many of them have square towers and Persian ventilators, with verandas of Moorish design which lean dangerously away from the walls in cantilever fashion. The town is built upon the sides of a sloping hill, with a sandstone foundation, and the houses are curiously stepped or terraced; one walks along a road to find it is the roof of a house and, peering over the edge, sees another street below. The top of the hill is dominated by the sheikh's palace—a sandstone shell, no longer occupied, although the ruler's flag flies from the main tower. The Sheikh of Dubai lives in a walled house on the far side of the creek, overlooking the harbour and the sea.

The houses in the residential section of Dubai are large and clean, with high white walls and magnificent doorways of Moorish design. Some of the richer merchants' dwellings have small streets within their walls, with twisting alleys, steep flights of stone stairs and dark, cool rooms leading from the covered courtyards. One has the strange feeling in Dubai of being indoors all the time; this is because all the streets are roofed with palm-matting and one seldom sees the sky. It was rather like a visit to an Arab village at the British Exhibition in Wembley, except that this was the real thing, with all the aromas and colours of reality. Yet Dubai is remarkably clean for an Arab town, and some of the open booths and shops have first-class wares for sale. I have bought leather travelling bags here—made by native craftsmen—which were as handsome and well-made as anything at Fortnum & Mason's, and the Persian shops have stocks of modern and antique carpets which would please the most fastidious collector or decorator.

In one of the smaller houses on the highest terrace we found Mr. Jam Shan, the pearl merchant, who invited us into his dark and tiny sitting-room office. Both he and his sons wore shirts and trousers, smoked English cigarettes, and conversed in quite good Cockney, as they had spent many years in London. With the radio blaring an Indian song they sat bare-legged on the floor and resumed their work of sorting and counting the heap of pearls

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which they smoke in tiny pipes with cane stems. The sheikh also collects 'protection' money from the neighbouring sheikhs, in return for which the Beni Quitab guarantee not to molest the tribesmen. Should this money not be forthcoming, however, a raid on the nearest town or village is a foregone conclusion; then slaves and camels will be stolen, to be sold later in the Baraimi market.

Tandy reported that he had detected a trail of smoke in the distance, so we decided to keep on our course. Eventually we reached a fenced-in enclosure, at one end of which was a low clay wall; leaning against the wall was an aged, toothless Arab. For a few leaves of tobacco he agreed to lead us to the *Badu* encampment. To our surprise it lay but a hundred yards to our right, screened from view by a hedge of scrubs. As we approached the goats'-skin tents of the tribesmen, a group of armed men calmly awaited us.

'Praise be to Allah! And who may you be?' enquired the elder of the guards.

'Praise be to Allah, and peace be on your heads!' replied Tandy, in his best Arabic, holding out his hand as a token of friendship. 'We come from the British Government, and are friends of Sheikh Mohammed bin Ali—may the blessings of Allah give peace to his old age! We desire you to take us to him.'

The guards nodded gravely at this speech and, hedging us in on either side, conducted us towards the main tent. There was a curious air of silence about the encampment; none of the occupants came out to stare at us and the only signs of activity were some chickens and goats in a pen, and the tethered camels which snarled as we passed. As we waited outside the flap of the tent opened and Hadi, the sheikh's son, emerged. He greeted Sheikh Hamid as an old friend and was introduced by him to Jasim, Tandy and the remainder of the party. Hadi expressed surprise at the visit, which he said was unexpected; his father and the older members of the tribe were asleep, and the others were out hunting.

The tent, which he invited us to enter, was a small, ramshackle affair of goats'-hair and sacking tied over *gharf* branches; a cheap Dubai mat lay on the floor. No sooner were we seated than the local notables came in to meet us and we had to rise on each occasion, nearly knocking the tent over as we did so. At length they were all assembled, seated around the floor in a circle. With twenty men in such a small space the atmosphere soon became suffocatingly hot, and the situation was not improved by the hundreds of flies

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Coastal trade along the Persian Gulf has for centuries been carried on by dhows — graceful vessels with one huge lateen sail and usually a second lesser one on the mizzen mast; many dhows can now boast auxiliary engines.

The inlet dividing Dibai is thronged with small craft. In the background may be seen the distinctive Persian-designed wind-towers which convey any available breezes to the living quarters below.

P. 191 (C)

244 and various vegetables are cultivated in the inland valleys. Cows, goats and other live-
233 stock are raised in the towns and the vil-
361 lages, but camels, goats and sheep are the mainstay of the Bedouin.

816 Ocher is mined on the offshore island of
471 Bu Musa, but no other mineral deposits of
135 commercial value are known to exist. The Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd., a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company, holds concessions for the exploitation of the oil reserves of Trucial Oman, and is conducting exploratory operations in the area. The discovery of oil would undoubtedly have a revolutionary effect upon the economy and the standards of living of the people.

361 A large majority of the inhabitants dwell in the headquarters towns of the different sheikhdoms or in adjacent fishing or agricultural villages. Most of the towns are compact, with narrow, crooked streets, darkened by projecting balconies and matting canopies put up for protection from the sun. Dibai, the largest, is a walled town with an estimated population of over 20,000. Sharja, the second in size, is a settlement of 3,000 to 15,000 which is unwalled but surrounded by a fringe of palm thatch, or *barasti*, huts.
● 344 The homes of the wealthy merchants are of
361 two stories with wide balconies and spacious inner courts, but those of the poor are usually simple one- or two-room huts of mud brick or palm thatch. The Bedouin live in the traditional black goat's hair tents of the nomadic tribes. They move about with their herds, following fresh pastures in the winter and congregating around desert wells in the
361 summer. A few join the fishing or the pearl-
228 ing fleets during the summer season, while their families camp in the vicinity of the towns.

144 The nutritional habits of the people vary
571 with the racial, the social and the economic backgrounds of the diverse communities. Poverty and lack of adequate transportation facilities restrict the foodstuffs available to a large percentage of the population.
262 Dates, breads prepared from wheat or mil-

p. 312(6)